

A Guide to the Braille and Talking Book Service

California State Library

H A N D B O O K

Braille and Talking Book Library



California State Library, Sacramento
Susan Hildreth
State Librarian of California





Contact Information

PHONE: (916) 654-0640
(800) 952-5666

Fax: (916) 654-1119

Hours: Monday through Friday
9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Mailing address: (For all mail EXCEPT books and machines)

P.O. Box 942837

Sacramento, CA 94237-0001

Street address: (For books and machines ONLY)

900 N Street

Sacramento, CA 95814

E-mail: btbl@library.ca.gov

Telephone Tips are on the reverse side of this page.

You can cut this page out and keep it by your telephone.

Telephone Tips

(916) 654-0640 Toll Free: (800) 952-5666

Our phone lines are extremely busy. Please be patient. We serve over 16,000 readers in Northern California.

Your calls will be answered by a receptionist from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday - Friday. A short message can be left on our toll free line after hours, weekends and holidays.

Please tell the receptionist what you need so your call can be transferred to the appropriate desk – for example,

Book service	Change of name or address
Magazine service	Machine problem
Canceling service	General information

When your call is transferred and you hear a recorded message, please leave your name (spelling it), a phone number (including area code) and a message. A complete message will enable us to provide the most efficient service. You can leave book request numbers (if known), machine exchange requests, address changes, etc. Call backs will be made only when clarification is needed. It is not necessary to make repeat calls for the same message.

Recorded messages are given TOP PRIORITY and will be responded to as soon as possible. This is the best way to leave information with the library.



Table of Contents

Contact Information.....	i
Telephone Tips.....	ii
Welcome	3
Who We Are... What We Do	5
What We Have	5
Books and magazines	5
California books	6
Foreign language books	6
Information and referral.....	6
What We Don't Have.....	7
Large print books and music.....	7
How the Service Works	7
Loan of books and equipment	9
How to Use the Books	9
Talking books	9
Braille books.....	10
Web-Braille.....	10
Returning books.....	10
Damaged books.....	12

How to Communicate with the Library	13
By phone	13
By mail	13
By fax.....	14
By e-mail.....	14
How to Use the Mail Service.....	14
Free matter	14
Delivery	14
How to Find Internet Information.....	15
How to Request Books	15
Talking Book Topics and Braille Book Review.....	16
Magazines	17
Newspapers, etc.....	18
How to Temporarily Stop Your Service	19
How to Use the Service in Nursing Homes, Public Libraries, Schools, Hospitals, etc.	20
How to Use the Cassette Player	22
Battery Care Instructions.....	23
How to Play a Four-Track Cassette.....	24
Care and Mailing of Talking Book Players	25
Accessories.....	26
BTBL Policy on Loan of Material	26
Suspension procedures	28



Welcome . . .

***to an exciting journey through the
world of books and magazines.***

This guide will help you understand and use the library services at the Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL).

Please read the guide completely. It will answer many of your questions.

A copy of this handbook is available in braille or on cassette for short-term loan. Call the library if you would like to borrow either version.

Be sure to read the Policy on Loan of Material on page 26. The policy describes the responsibilities of the borrower and the library.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve you and hope you will enjoy your braille and/or talking book service.

Please contact us if you have questions or need help with your service.





Who We Are . . . What We Do

The Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) provides library services to people in Northern California who are unable to read standard print books because of visual or physical disabilities. BTBL cooperates with the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind (NLS). The Library of Congress provides the books, catalogs and the equipment. BTBL, which is administered by the California State Library, distributes these materials to readers in Northern California. This service is provided without charge to all eligible readers.

What We Have

From the classics to current bestsellers to many of today's most popular magazines, the Braille and Talking Book Library provides general interest reading materials typical of what you find in your local public library. You can read popular fiction such as mysteries, westerns, romances and non-fiction such as biographies, history and science.

These materials are provided in braille or on cassettes (talking books). Talking books require special playback equipment because they are recorded at a special speed. You may choose to receive braille or talking books or both. Magazines are available in braille and on cassette.

California books

A small collection of books of local California interest (including history) is available on cassette. A catalog, BTBL Talking Books on California, is available upon request. These books have been recorded by local volunteers.

Foreign language books

Books are available in other languages besides English. A limited number of titles are available in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and other languages.

We can also refer you to other sources for additional foreign language literature and instructional material.

Information and referral

BTBL maintains a collection of print books, magazines, pamphlets and other resources to assist with your questions about:

- visual and physical disabilities
- other agencies which provide braille and recorded materials (such as Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, Clearinghouse for Specialized Media and Technology, etc.)
- volunteer groups or individuals who produce print books in braille, large print or cassette formats
- sources for the purchase of assistive devices
- community service and related agencies

What We Don't Have

Large print books and music

BTBL does NOT have large print books or recordings of music. Public libraries provide these materials. Musical scores and instructional materials are available in special formats from:

Music Section
National Library Service
for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20542
1-800-424-8567

How The Service Works

You will have a reader advisor to help you with library services. The reader advisor will

maintain a confidential file for you which lists:


- the type of services desired
- your reading interests
- magazine subscriptions
- books which have been requested
- books previously read
- equipment assigned

You will be sent catalogs when you start the service. New catalogs will be available periodically after that. No print catalog lists all of our books due to the large size of the collection.

You may use the BTBL online catalog to search for books and place requests. Link to our catalog from our homepage at

www.library.ca.gov/html/pubser05.cfm

A more comprehensive catalog is available online at **www.loc.gov/nls**



The Talking Book Topics magazine and Braille Book Review announce new books and are sent every other month. (For more information see page 16.)

You may order books by returning the order forms in the catalogs, sending a letter, by e-mail or by sending a fax. You can always request books by title, author or subject without finding them in any of our catalogs.

You may also ask the library to select books for you when your requests are not available. Books will be selected on the general reading interests you choose, such as westerns, mysteries, biographies and romances. You can also request braille and recorded magazines.

You will be sent an initial supply of recorded

and/or braille books. If you find you are receiving too few or too many books, call your reader advisor so that the quantity you receive can be adjusted.

When you return a book to us, a replacement book will be sent to you. However, it may take a week or more for the book to reach you through the mail.

Readers may also use the browsing collection available in the Reading Room located at 900 N Street, Sacramento. A few disabled parking spaces are available behind the building. Enter the alley just south of N Street from 10th Street.

Loan of books and equipment

Five weeks is the loan period for individual readers. Three months is the loan period for institutions.

Overdue notices may be sent for unreturned books.

You will be responsible for books and equipment loaned to you. Do not loan these materials to other readers. You will not get replacements for books loaned to you until they are returned to us.

To remain active for this service and to retain use of the cassette player we provide, you need to order at least one book or magazine a year from us.

Be sure to read the Policy on Loan of Material found on page 26. The policy

describes the responsibility of the borrower and the library.

How To Use The Books


Keep your books in a safe place, out of the sun and away from pets, food and liquids, small children, moisture and heat.

Talking books (cassettes)

To avoid mixing up books, we suggest reading one book at a time.

Before starting a cassette book, insert the first tape and press the rewind button to ensure the tape has been completely rewound.

When you finish a cassette book, please rewind the last tape. Insert the tape with the braille side up and press rewind.



If you decide you do not want to finish a cassette book, please insert the unfinished tape with the braille side up and press rewind.

Braille books

Our collection is in Contracted or Grade 2 braille. It includes print/braille picture books for young children and some hand-copied books. Please call or write if you want more information. Braille book catalogs are available.

Web-Braille

Web-Braille is an Internet, web-based service that provides, in an electronic format, many braille books and all braille magazines produced by the National Library Service for the Blind (NLS). The Web-Braille site is password-protected and all files are

in an electronic form of Grade 2 braille, a format requiring the use of special equipment for access.


To register for Web-Braille, library users must contact BTBL and provide the library with an e-mail address and a six to eight character password.

When the subscription is activated, the new subscriber will receive access instructions by e-mail.

Returning books

Send books back to us one at a time to ensure smooth mail service. "Stockpiling" them can mean long periods without any books.

To return books, turn the mailing label over. When the hole on the label is in the lower left-hand corner, the label is correct for returning. No postage



is needed for the
containers.

The book containers
should not be taped or

tied together in bundles
unless the book is in two
containers.


Damaged books

Your cooperation is needed to identify damaged books since we cannot inspect every book.

Damaged books can include incomplete or incorrect contents, broken or jammed cassette tapes, inaudible cassettes, braille books with missing or loose pages, etc.

You will not be held responsible for reasonable book damage.

If you have a damaged book, mark an "X" in the box located in the top left corner or anywhere on the return mailing label. Call your reader advisor if you want another copy of the book.

Check if damaged <input type="checkbox"/>	 (420) 95814	FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND OR HANDICAPPED
Braille and Talking Book Library California State Library 900 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814		

Note: A jammed cassette will sometimes loosen up if it is removed from the machine and gently rapped on a table.

How To Communicate With The Library

By phone

Call BTBL promptly to report all address, phone or name changes.

The Library hours are Monday through Friday, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Use the toll-free number (1-800-952-5666) for brief messages such as the above changes, for service problems, to arrange for machine repairs, to notify us when you are going on vacation, etc.

All incoming calls are handled by a receptionist. It may be necessary for you to leave a voicemail message for your reader advisor. Their response to your call may happen a few hours or days later. Each reader advisor is

responsible for several thousand readers.

A telephone answering machine will record short messages (30 seconds) received during closed or weekend hours on the toll-free line.

Please read the Telephone Tips on page ii of the Handbook. You may want to tear this page out and keep it near the phone.

By mail

Mail in request lists and any lengthy messages to:
Braille and Talking
Book Library
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA
94237-0001

Mail in BOOKS AND
MACHINES ONLY to:
Braille and Talking
Book Library
900 N Street
Sacramento, CA
95814

PLEASE DO NOT PUT NOTES IN THE BOOK CONTAINERS.

By fax

The fax number is:
(916) 654-1119

By e-mail

The address is:
btbl@library.ca.gov

How To Use The Mail Service

Free matter

Books, machines and request lists should be sent postage free. Simply write "Free Matter for the Blind" in the upper right-hand corner, where the stamp would go. Book containers will have a mailing label that is already marked. All you have to do is turn over the mailing label card so our address shows.

Delivery

Make arrangements with your mail carrier so s/he will not mark the books "refused" if you are not at home.

If necessary, make special arrangements with your apartment manager or institution director since the books may not fit in your mail box.

Mail carriers are NOT required to pick up materials at your home. If you cannot use street letter boxes, discuss it with your carrier.

1. You may be able to hand materials directly to your carrier or
2. He or she may request that you take them to your local post office.

Materials should NOT be left on the doorstep because of high loss rate.

How to Find Internet Information

BTBL Internet address:
www.library.ca.gov/html/pubser05.cfm

National Library Service
Internet address:
www.loc.gov/nls/

How To Request Books

You may request books by a number of different methods:


By mail: Request list forms are included in the back of the catalogs, Talking Book Topics and Braille Book Review. (See next section on Talking Book Topics for more information.)

You may also send requests on regular sheets of paper. List books by number (such as RC 16534, BR 6230, etc.) RC indicates cassettes, and BR braille books.

By phone: You may call us anytime and speak to a receptionist or your reader advisor or leave a voice message with your book requests. If you choose this option, please speak slowly and clearly, spelling any title or author that might be hard to understand and leave your name (spelling it clearly) and phone number so we may call you back if we have questions.

By e-mail: You may send e-mail to btbl@library.ca.gov with your book requests.

By fax: Fax us at 916-654-1119 if you wish to send your book order by fax machine.



You will need to maintain a request list of about 30-50 titles. Fewer requests may mean no books will be available when you return a book, while over 100 may mean long waits to get a particular book.

You may request books by title or author and we will find out if they are available. Send in a request for a book only once, unless you want to receive the book again.

If you run out of books on your request list, you may get books from the categories listed on your account.

Westerns and mysteries are very popular. At times there are none available, which means requesting old ones again or reading something else.

Talking Book Topics and Braille Book Review

Every other month talking book readers will receive a publication which lists recently produced books. This publication is called Talking Book Topics (TBT) and is available on cassette or in large print.

Braille readers will receive Braille Book Review (BBR) which is available in Braille, large print and diskette. The braille edition lists both braille and talking books.

Order forms are enclosed in each TBT and BBR issue. Please check the books you wish to receive and return the order form(s) to the Braille and Talking Book Library.

You may notice some delay in receiving books ordered from TBT and BBR. The demand for these titles is very high when announced in the current issue.

Please note:

- Any request lists or correspondence about TBT or BBR should be sent to the library at

BTBL
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA
94237-0001
(NOT Florida or
Washington, D.C.)

- If a TBT or BBR is returned by the post office marked "refused," the producer will cancel your subscription.

Magazines

BTBL provides magazines in braille and on cassettes. Available magazines are listed in Talking Book Topics (TBT) and Braille Book Review (BBR). We order these magazines for you but most are sent directly to you by the producer.

Magazines (including TBT and BBR) which come from the producer are yours to keep and should not be returned.

Only Choice magazine is sent out on loan from us and needs to be returned. The Choice container has a mailing label that can be turned over, with BTBL's return address. Please return this magazine promptly since other readers are waiting for it. Returning the magazine will ensure the next issue is sent to you.

Helpful magazine, TBT and BBR service information:

1. BTBL will handle magazine subscriptions, changes, cancellations and address changes for you. Please let us know immediately about these changes.

2. You may experience a delay of 2 months when adding, changing or stopping a magazine, TBT or BBR.

3. We recommend that you take no more than ten magazine subscriptions initially. If you find you are receiving too few or too many magazines, call us so that we can adjust the quantity you receive.

4. If the post office sends your magazines, TBT or BBR back for any reason, your subscription will


automatically be cancelled by the producer.

5. If you go on vacation, have someone pick up your magazines, TBT or BBR so the post office does not return them.

Newspapers, etc.

Daily newspapers are available to you through your touch-tone telephone. Newspapers from throughout California and the United States send electronic text to the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in Baltimore for processing and distribution. Over 200 local and national papers can be read and more are being added.

Listen to audio versions of your favorite titles, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through a toll free number. Each reader has



his/her own identification number and security code, which are entered using the touch-tone keypad.

You can choose which paper you want to listen to and decide whether you want to read the current edition, previous day's edition or Sunday edition of that paper. When listening to a paper you can select a section of the paper to read and then jump from one article to the next, move within an article, change the speaking speed or reading voice, spell out words or search for words.


The national papers include the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, USA Today and the Christian Science Monitor. California titles include the San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, Sacramento Bee, Contra Costa Times, Fresno Bee, San Jose

Mercury News, Oakland Tribune and more. This free service will keep you up to date on all the news.

How To Temporarily Stop Your Service

You may choose to temporarily stop your book service because of special circumstances such as vacations or illness. Please call and let us know when you want books again. We will start your service **ONLY** when you call and say you are ready for books again.

Magazines, TBT and BBR are handled differently than books. They cannot be put on hold temporarily. Have someone pick up your magazines or have the post office hold them so your subscription(s) will not be cancelled.



If you will be in another library service area for six months or longer, the regional library in that area will serve you. You may borrow a cassette player from that library or take the one you have. Please call and let us know when you are moving.

How To Use The Service In Nursing Homes, Public Libraries, Schools, Hospitals, etc.


Many institutions and agencies borrow a group of books from us to serve their readers.

If you get ALL your books and equipment from one of these organizations, you should work directly with the person providing the service.

If you have your own individual service and ALSO borrow from an organization:

1. Keep the books and machines loaned to you separate from those loaned to the organization.
2. We suggest you select all your own titles (rather than having us select for you) or you may get duplicate books.
3. Individuals must borrow at least one book or magazine a year in their own name to retain library service and use of the equipment provided by BTBL.

You may retain your own service if you move into a hospital or nursing home. Be sure to let us know your new address.



Special note to organizations providing library service:

- Call and let us know when there is going to be a change in the staff person responsible for providing the service to your readers.

- Use the exact organization or institution name, including the name of the responsible staff member, when contacting the library.

- Be sure to keep track of your playback equipment. This equipment has been assigned to your organization and you are the staff person responsible for it.

- Return books and magazines within the 3 month loan period. The loan period for institutions is 3 months and 5 weeks

for individuals. Popular titles can be renewed or requested again.

- Contact the library if you have questions on how to better utilize the library service in your facility. The library has additional materials which may be helpful to you.

How To Use The Cassette Player

Operating instructions are on the cassette tape that comes with your player. If there is no instruction tape, contact us.

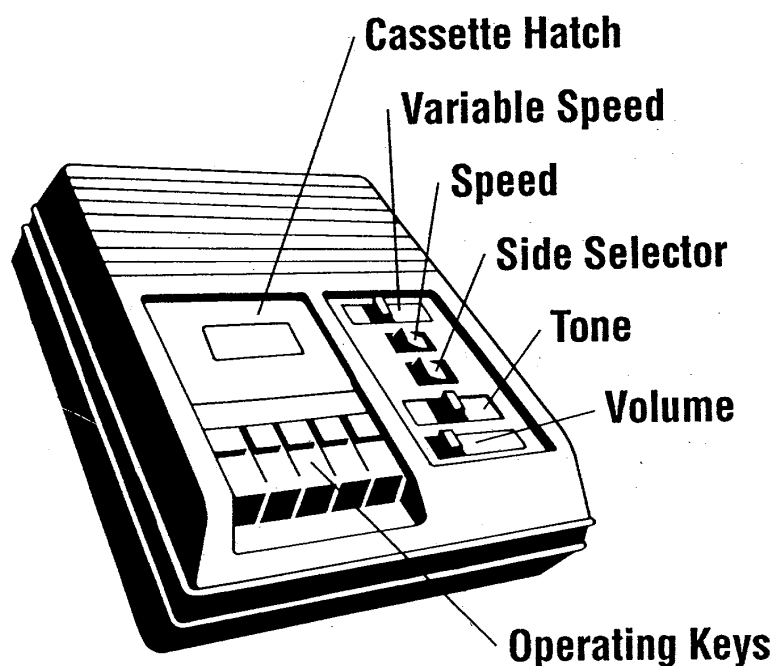
To play the instruction tape:

1. Remove the power cord from the storage compartment at the rear of the machine and plug it into a wall outlet.

2. Wait for the battery to charge, which can take up to an hour. Read battery care instructions on the next page.

3. Press the green "play" key down until it locks into place. This key is marked with a raised circle.

4. The instruction tape will explain how to use the player. Please listen to this tape before you read your first book.



Please note:

The cassette player is designed to operate on battery or plugged in. Please read the battery care instructions on the next page.

Battery Care Instructions

The C-1 cassette machines all have a rechargeable battery pack. To fully charge the battery it must be connected to an electrical outlet for approximately 12 to 14 hours, without playing the machine. Playing the machine while it is plugged in does not recharge (or discharge) the battery.

The machine will play approximately 4 to 6 hours on a fully charged battery. When the battery starts to lose its charge the tape will slow down or sound faint. When this happens, plug the machine into an electrical outlet and continue to play your tape as needed.

You may charge your machine battery in either of two ways:

1. Leave it plugged in as much as you like or
2. Unplug it occasionally (once a week is fine) and play it until the battery runs down. Then plug it in again, let it recharge for about 12-14 hours without playing it and resume using the machine.

The machine may be treated like any conventional consumer appliance with rechargeable batteries.

If you plan to be gone for a few days or more, we recommend that you unplug your machine for extended battery life and for safety reasons.

How To Play A Four-Track Cassette

Most cassette tapes have four sides (tracks) of recording. To listen to a complete cassette tape, follow the instructions the narrator provides at the end of each side. These are the steps you will follow:

1. Begin with the side marked 1, with the braille side up. You will be able to feel the braille dots on this side. Rewind if necessary by pressing the rewind button.

2. Push the side selector switch to the left (1-2) position.

3. Listen to side one, then turn the cassette over (braille side face DOWN) and listen to the second side.

4. For side three, remove the cassette tape and turn it over again (braille side facing UP). Push the side selector switch to the right (3-4) position. For side four, turn the tape over once more (braille side DOWN).

5. Continue the book with the next cassette tape, marked 5, with the side selector switch back in the left side (1-2) position.

6. When you finish a cassette book, please rewind the last tape. Insert the tape with the braille side up and press rewind.

In short, listen to both sides with the side selector switch in the 1-2 position, then both sides again with the switch in the 3-4 position.

Care and Mailing Of Talking Book Players

Care

Avoid placing cassette player in direct sunlight or near food and liquids, pets or excessive heat.

Avoid eating or drinking around the player.

Mailing of players

Please save the box in which the player was delivered. You will need it to return the player. Any sturdy box may be used. However, the original box and packing material is best. A return mailing label is on each box.

If you do not have a mailing label, you can write the library's address:

**BTBL
900 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814**

on the outside of the box. Be sure to write "Free Matter for the Blind" in the upper right hand corner. You can also call and request a mailing label.

DO NOT use outside postal collection boxes because machines do not fit. Hand off to postal employee—either delivery employee or in post office.

Call us if your equipment does not work properly. DO NOT take it to a commercial repair shop.

When you return your player for any reason, be sure to indicate why. If the player no longer works, mark an "X" in the box located in the top left corner of the return mailing label. Please let us know if you need a replacement player. Your service will be stopped if you do not notify us that you want a replacement.

Accessories

The library can furnish special accessories for the players that may help you use the equipment.

Amplifier

- for people with a significant hearing loss
- a separate application form must be signed by a medical doctor or a licensed audiologist

Extension lever

- for people who have difficulty using the key controls on a cassette player
- makes it easier to depress the control buttons

Please note:

Lightweight headphones may ensure privacy of reading. Headphones can be purchased at commercial stores.


Braille and Talking Book Library Policy On Loan Of Material

Background

The following policies govern the circulation of Braille and Talking Book Library books and equipment to eligible readers who are blind and/or physically disabled. Eligible readers who borrow materials from the library accept responsibility for using the materials with reasonable care, returning them to the library according to established loan policies and not losing or damaging them through negligence. Violation of this policy can result in suspension of some or all library service.

Policy

Braille books, talking books and specialized



playback equipment will be loaned by this library to eligible registered readers without charge and this library will keep records of all such loans. The borrower should notify the library of changes of address, a desire to cancel the service or temporary or permanent transfer of service to another geographic area.

Equipment necessary to read the talking books may be borrowed on extended loan for as long as the borrower is using it to read materials provided by the library. One cassette player will be loaned to each eligible borrower.


In the event that a machine ceases to function properly or needs repair, it should be returned to the library and a replacement will be provided. The library may require the borrower to

return the malfunctioning player before loaning a replacement or the library may send a replacement before receiving the malfunctioning player.

The library will base this decision upon the borrower's history of reliable return. Under no circumstances should a borrower attempt to repair the playback equipment or accessories.

An individual borrower in good standing may have a maximum of 25 books charged to him or her at any one time. An institution may have a maximum of 50 books.

These maximums include books in transit either to or from this library. Once a borrower reaches the maximum number of books, no additional books will be sent until books are returned. For each book returned, a



replacement book will be sent to the borrower.

The loan period for books is five weeks for individuals and three months for institutions. No fines for overdue books will be levied. Overdue notices are sent periodically and borrowers are urged to observe the loan period so books can be available for other readers.

The borrower will ensure that books, magazines and equipment being returned to the library by free matter are delivered into the hands of the United States Postal Service by being placed in a mailbox or delivered to the post office. Placing them on the doorstep of the borrower's home for the mail carrier to pick up does not constitute delivery into the hands of the postal service. If problems arise by use of this method, the borrower

is responsible for the lost or damaged books.

Borrowers may not lend library books, magazines or equipment to other persons.

In cases of repeated verbal abuse of library staff, the borrower's library service may be suspended.

Suspension procedures

In the event that any of these policies are violated repeatedly, the borrower's service may be suspended for a period of time after being given a written warning and an opportunity to reply. After reinstatement of service, if abuse continues, service may be suspended again.

In the event of suspension, the following steps will be taken:

1. The library will first discuss the problem noted with the patron by telephone or in person. Then a warning letter will be sent that summarizes the problem, the discussion, and provides an opportunity for the patron to reply.

2. If abuse recurs, a second written communication will be sent to the patron. The letter will cite the earlier warning letter, list examples of subsequent abuse, give the patron an opportunity to reply by a certain date and then suspend the service for a stated period (up to 6 months). A specific date for resumption of service will be included in this letter.

3. When the service is resumed, a letter will be sent to the borrower

notifying him/her of the resumption of the service. This letter will remind the patron that further recurrences will result in another suspension of service as it relates to the documented abuse.